**SOCIAL STUDIES RUBRIC**

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|  | 8 or 7  Exceeding Expectations | 6 or 5  Fully Meeting Expectations | 4 or 3  Minimally Meeting Expectations | 2 or 1  Not Yet Meeting Expectations |
| **Knowledge** of evidence from  the social sciences:  facts/supporting details;  themes/issues; and  concepts/ideas | • Key concepts/themes/  issues/ideas thoroughly  identified, defined and  described  • Significant  facts/supporting details  included and accurately  described  • Has few or no factual  inaccuracies | • Key concepts/themes/  issues/ideas identified,  defined, and described  • Facts/supporting details included  • May have a major factual  inaccuracy, but most  information is correct | • Some key concepts/  themes/issues/ideas  identified, defined, and  described  • Some facts/supporting  details included  • Has some correct and  some incorrect information | • Few or no key concepts/  themes/issues/ideas  identified, defined, and  described  • Few or no facts/supporting  details included  • Information largely  inaccurate, absent or irrelevant |
| **Reasoning:** Analysis,  evaluation, and synthesis of  evidence. | • Identifies & logically  organizes almost all relevant evidence  • Uses appropriate and  comprehensive critical  thinking skills and habits of  mind to analyze, evaluate, and  synthesize evidence  • Reaches informed  conclusions based on the  evidence | • Identifies & organizes  most of the relevant evidence  • Uses partial critical  thinking skills and habits of  mind to analyze, evaluate, and  synthesize evidence  • Reaches informed  conclusions based on the  evidence | • Identifies some relevant evidence and omits most of the other evidence  • Uses unclear,  inappropriate, or incomplete  critical thinking skills and habits of mind to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize  evidence  • Reaches incomplete or inaccurate conclusions based  on the evidence | • Important evidence  relevant to the problem is not identified  • Critical thinking skills and  habits of mind are absent  • Conclusions are lacking, absent or unclear |
| **Communication:** Demonstrates knowledge and  reasoning through oral, written, visual, dramatic,  or mixed media presentation | • Almost all ideas in the presentation are  expressed in a way that provides evidence of student's knowledge and reasoning processes  • The presentation is well focused with a well-defined  thesis  • Presentation shows substantial evidence of  organization  • Presentation shows attention to the details of specific performance conventions | • Most ideas in the presentation are expressed  in a way that provides evidence of the student's  knowledge and reasoning processes  • The presentation demonstrates a focus and thesis with several narrative gaps  • Presentation demonstrates adequate evidence  of organization  • Presentation has errors in attention to the details of specific performance conventions | • Some ideas in the presentation are expressed in a way that provides evidence of the student's  knowledge and reasoning processes  • The presentation demonstrates an inadequate  focus and thesis  • Presentation demonstrates inadequate  evidence of organization  • Presentation has insufficient attention to the details of specific performance conventions | • Expression of almost all ideas in the  presentation is unclear  • The presentation demonstrate little focus and lacks a thesis  • Presentation demonstrates little or no evidence of organization  • Presentation has multiple mistakes in  attention to the details of specific performance conventions. |

**The Social Studies Rubric**

This rubric separates the skills a student possesses into three dimensions: knowledge, reasoning, and communication. The three dimensions overlap to show what students know and what they can do. Each dimension of the rubric is divided into four levels. Each level is defined by several criteria, which reflect a student's abilities and skills.

“Exceeding Expectations” and “Fully Meeting Expectations” are designed to differentiate among students whose knowledge, reasoning, and communication skills are developed. “Minimally Meeting Expectations” and “Not Yet Meeting Expectations” represent a student's knowledge, reasoning, and communication skills that are still developing.

*The gap between “Fully Meeting” and “Minimally Meeting” is wider than the gap between any of the other levels because it differentiates between a student whose skills are still developing and a student whose skills are developed.*

Students can be at different levels in different skills. For example, a student might have a lot of knowledge, but have difficulty communicating the knowledge. Teachers take this into account.

**Dimension 1: Knowledge**

Knowledge of evidence from the social sciences: facts/supporting details; themes/issues; and concepts/ideas

Knowledge of evidence is basic to the social sciences. Students who have high knowledge skill are able to demonstrate their ability to identify, define, and describe key concepts, themes, issues, and ideas; they show their awareness of the connection between key facts and supporting details; and they are accurate in their use of facts and details. They are thorough, inclusive, and accurate.

Similarly, students who are developing knowledge are unable to demonstrate their ability to identify, define, and describe key concepts, themes, issues, and ideas; they show an inadequate awareness of the connection between key facts and supporting details; and they are largely inaccurate in their use of facts and details.

**Dimension 2: Reasoning**

Students must also be able to demonstrate the ability to reason. Reasoning makes facts, issues, and concepts meaningful.

Reasoning involves translation, interpretation, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information. Students must discover relationships among facts and generalizations, values and opinions. Reasoning abilities and skills also include accessing, classifying, and applying information to provide a solution to a problem, to make a judgment, or reach a logical conclusion.

A student with developed reasoning ability must be able to organize evidence and select and apply an appropriate method for analysis, evaluation, and synthesis. To analyze and evaluate evidence effectively, whether that evidence is presented in a printed document, a song, poem, picture, or statistical table, a student must ask relevant questions. A student with developed reasoning abilities also uses critical thinking skills and habits of mind to evaluate evidence. These thinking skills and habits of mind include comparing and contrasting, identifying causes and effects, developing and recognizing alternative solutions, showing relationships among concepts, recognizing bias, separating fact from opinion, identifying inconsistencies in logic, avoiding present-mindedness, and maintaining an empathetic attitude toward the people under study. Students who possess habits of mind display self-discipline as thinkers. They create projects with care and thoroughness.

Students who are developing their ability in reasoning fail to organize information for proper analysis and may omit evidence. A developing student may also select an inappropriate method for analyzing, evaluating, and synthesizing evidence. Students who are in the process of developing reasoning skills have difficulty thinking critically. For example, they may accept evidence at face value without subjecting it to any critical analysis or evaluation. Finally, the inability to reach a reasonable, informed conclusion indicates a student who is still in the developing stage.

**Dimension 3: Communication**

Demonstrate knowledge and reasoning through oral, written, visual, dramatic, or mixed media presentations

To be useful, a student's knowledge and reasoning must be communicated to a wider audience. Effective communication requires focus and organization. A student must be able to identify issues and concepts clearly, explain the various parts of a problem, and present possible resolutions.

The most important aspect of communication is the student's ability to express clearly his or her ideas.

Clarity depends upon organization. A well-organized presentation includes a focus statement, supplies relevant examples to support main ideas, and offers conclusions based on evidence. Furthermore, an effective presentation provides evidence of a student's knowledge and reasoning processes.

A student can select a variety of techniques to communicate his or her knowledge and reasoning skills.

Each communication technique has its own conventions which teachers should take into account. For example, assessing an oral report may include such conventions as effective use of voice, gestures, eye contact, and use of visual aids. Assessing a student-made exhibit might include such conventions as the use of color, neatness, captions, and the selection of appropriate pictures, photographs, maps, and other materials.

A student who has developed ability in communication demonstrates knowledge and reasoning skills in a clear and organized fashion. The presentation will also take into account the appropriate conventions for the selected activity. A higher has main ideas and reasoning processes which are focused, well developed, and clearly articulated. Finally, a presentation at the highest level of development meets all the convention standards for the type of activity the teacher assigns or the student selects.

A student who is developing his or her communication skills lacks the ability to present knowledge and reasoning clearly and effectively in an organized presentation. That is, a student who is still developing cannot successfully provide a thesis or a focus statement, or convey information through examples that support and elaborate a main idea, or present an informed conclusion. Lastly, a developing student neglects the details of the performance convention that he or she has selected as a means to communicate knowledge and reasoning.

Critical Thinking Skills

• Identifying central issues

• Making comparisons

• Determining relevant information

• Formulating appropriate questions

• Expressing problems

• Distinguishing fact from opinion

• Recognizing bias

• Distinguishing false from accurate images.

• Analyzing cause and effect

• Drawing conclusions

• Identifying alternatives

• Testing conclusions

• Predicting consequences

• Demonstrating reasoned judgment

Adapted from Alternative Assessment in the Social Sciences:

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Habits of Mind

• Understand the significance of the past and the present to own life and to the lives of others

• Distinguish between the important and the inconsequential

• Perceive events and issues as they were experienced by people at the time

• Understand how human intentions matter

• Understand the interplay of change and continuity

• Realize that not all problems have solutions

• Appreciate the often tentative nature of judgments

• Recognize the importance of individuals who have made a difference

• Appreciate the force of the non-rational, the irrational, and the accidental in human efforts

• Understand the relationship between people, time, and place as the context for events

• Recognize the difference between fact and conjecture

• Use evidence to frame useful questions